Paper Plate Abacus

Kit contains:

- 1 Plate with holes
- 1 Cardboard strip with holes
- 5 Wooden skewers
- 35 Beads: 7 each of 5 colors

Recommended:

- Abacus Tutorial 1: Basic Function: https://youtu.be/FTVXUG_PngE

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INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1. Poke the wooden skewers through the holes on one side of the plate.

Step 2. Thread 5 same-color beads onto each of the skewers.

Step 3. Thread the skewers through the holes on the cardboard divider.

(Step 1)

(Step 2)

(Step 3)

Step 4. Above the divider, thread the last 2 matching beads onto each skewer. Then poke the skewers through the holes on the other side of the plate.

You have built a classic abacus (suan-pan) of the type first used for calculations in China around 1200 CE. Variations of the abacus have been used for centuries in cultures all over the world.

HOW TO USE YOUR ABACUS

Think of the columns of an abacus like the place values of a number. From right to left: ones, tens, hundreds, and so on.

ten-thousands

thousands

hundreds

tens

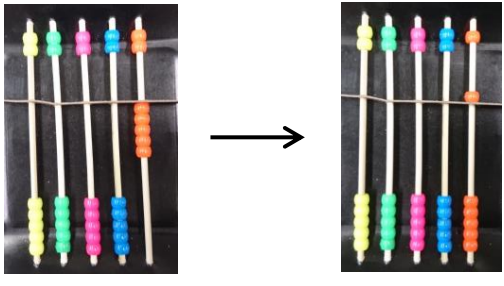
ones

Beads are counted when they're moved toward the divider. Beads on the bottom are worth 1 unit; beads on top are worth 5 units.

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ +\ 3 \\ \hline 8 \end{array}$$

This abacus shows the number 8.

When you reach 5 single units on the bottom, you "exchange" them for a 5 bead on top.



Putting it all together, this abacus shows:

- 8 ten-thousands
- 9 thousands,
- 2 hundreds
- 8 tens
- 5 ones

89,285

For more in-depth instruction, check out Swedish educator Pelle Lindblå's abacus tutorials on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVYm4hbKyOudk5Mjuw6pv_pKJmJIwDD1O